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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [AEMR](#) [CASC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: KHARTOUM EAC CONVENED TO DISCUSS REVERSE TRIPWIRES AND AD STATUS

REF: A) STATE 22076
B) KHARTOUM 473
C) KHARTOUM 343
D) KHARTOUM 305

1. (SBU) DCM Mark Asquino convened an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting on Sunday, April 5, to review reverse tripwires for the Mission's (reftel B) lifting of authorized departure (AD) status. The DCM, POL, MGT, DLO, RAO, USAID, RMO, PAO, CONS, and RSO were in attendance.

2. (SBU) The EAC unanimously agreed that conditions leading to Washington's approval of AD status for Embassy Khartoum have changed in a manner sufficiently significant to end AD and permit the return to Khartoum of EFMs and non-emergency staff. Based on this re-evaluation, the EAC unanimously supports Khartoum's being taken off AD status on April 9, at the end of the 30 day AD period.

3. (SBU) The EAC reviewed each of Post's ICC-specific tripwires carefully and identified the current status of each as outlined below:

a. (SBU) "Cessation of Non-Violent/Violent Demonstrations": There were no violent demonstrations at or near US Government facilities following the March 4 International Criminal Court (ICC) announcement or March 5 expulsion by the Government of Sudan (GOS) of 13 Western NGOs (in retaliation for the ICC action) doing humanitarian work in Darfur. Additionally, there have been no large, non-violent demonstrations at US Government facilities since March 7. Similarly, there were no demonstrations of any sort or other anti-U.S. threats against Embassy staff or facilities following the March 26 announcement by U.S. and international media of attacks in eastern Sudan by foreign aircraft against alleged, Gaza-bound weapons convoys.

b. (SBU) "GOS police support is sufficient and reliable": Since ICC issuance of an arrest warrant for President Omar al Bashir, the GOS has fully complied with its pledges to enhance security at all U.S. Embassy facilities and residences. The GOS has provided riot police and additional protection for the Chancery, other Embassy facilities and designated residences in the days following the ICC announcement. The GOS also has been responsive to RSO requests for security assistance and cooperation since then.

c. (SBU) "Media become less negative and inciting": In response to the ICC indictment and subsequent NGO expulsions, President Bashir, other senior GOS officials and government-controlled media used strong rhetoric to blast both the U.S. and West as having "colluded" with the ICC in a "conspiracy" against Sudan. However, as reported (reftel C), such rhetoric has decreased markedly in recent weeks, with the result that the political atmosphere is less politically-charged.

d. (SBU) "Decrease in NGO harassment": The GOS has now returned the passports initially seized from U.S. citizens and other nationals working for the expelled NGOs. Other harassment of the NGOs and their staffs has also declined somewhat in recent weeks. However,

GOS demands that the NGOs provide exorbitant severance pay for their local staffs remain a source of tension.

e. (SBU) "Increased access to GOS officials": The GOS not only facilitated high-level NCP government appointments for the April 2-11 visit of new U.S. Special Presidential Envoy to Sudan Scott Gration, but also agreed to unprecedented meetings for him with senior Sudan Armed Forces officers and the NCP Shura Council. In addition, the regime is allowing him access to previously-off-limits rebel commanders in Darfur. The GOS has also agreed to a CODEL visit later this month. This will be the first such CODEL visit to Khartoum in the past two years.

f. (SBU) "Removal of most operational restrictions": In early March, the Post reported (reftel D) that the GOS had become increasingly less-cooperative on a range of normally-resolvable, operational issues in the lead-up to the March 4 announcement of the ICC arrest warrant. These included GOS insistence on screening all outbound U.S. Embassy diplomatic pouches, a "slow down" in issuance of non-diplomatic license plates for official vehicles, the confiscation and impounding at Khartoum International Airport of a shipment of unclassified E+E radios and equipment intended for Consulate General Juba, and the refusal of visas for U.S. military officers assigned to UNAMID. During the past month, the Mission has been able to resolve all of these operational issues, each involving GOS-imposed restrictions, with the exception of the final one.

g. (SBU) "Diminished vitriolic rhetoric from religious leaders": In recent weeks there has been a marked decrease in anti-U.S. rhetoric during Friday afternoon prayers.

13. (SBU) Comment: The EAC believes, and the COM concurs, that there has been a reversal in a sufficient number of security, political and operational tripwires to warrant the lifting of authorized departure at the end of the present 30 day period. The Mission will continue to remain on high alert for terrorist-related and other threats against its personnel and facilities. The EAC will carefully monitor the overall security situation and periodically review and report on Mission tripwires.

FERNANDEZ